KELLY THOMPSON ★ MARCO FERRARI ★ LEE LOUGHRIDGE

SCARLETT

image

#04

ENERGON UNIVERSE

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SCARLETT

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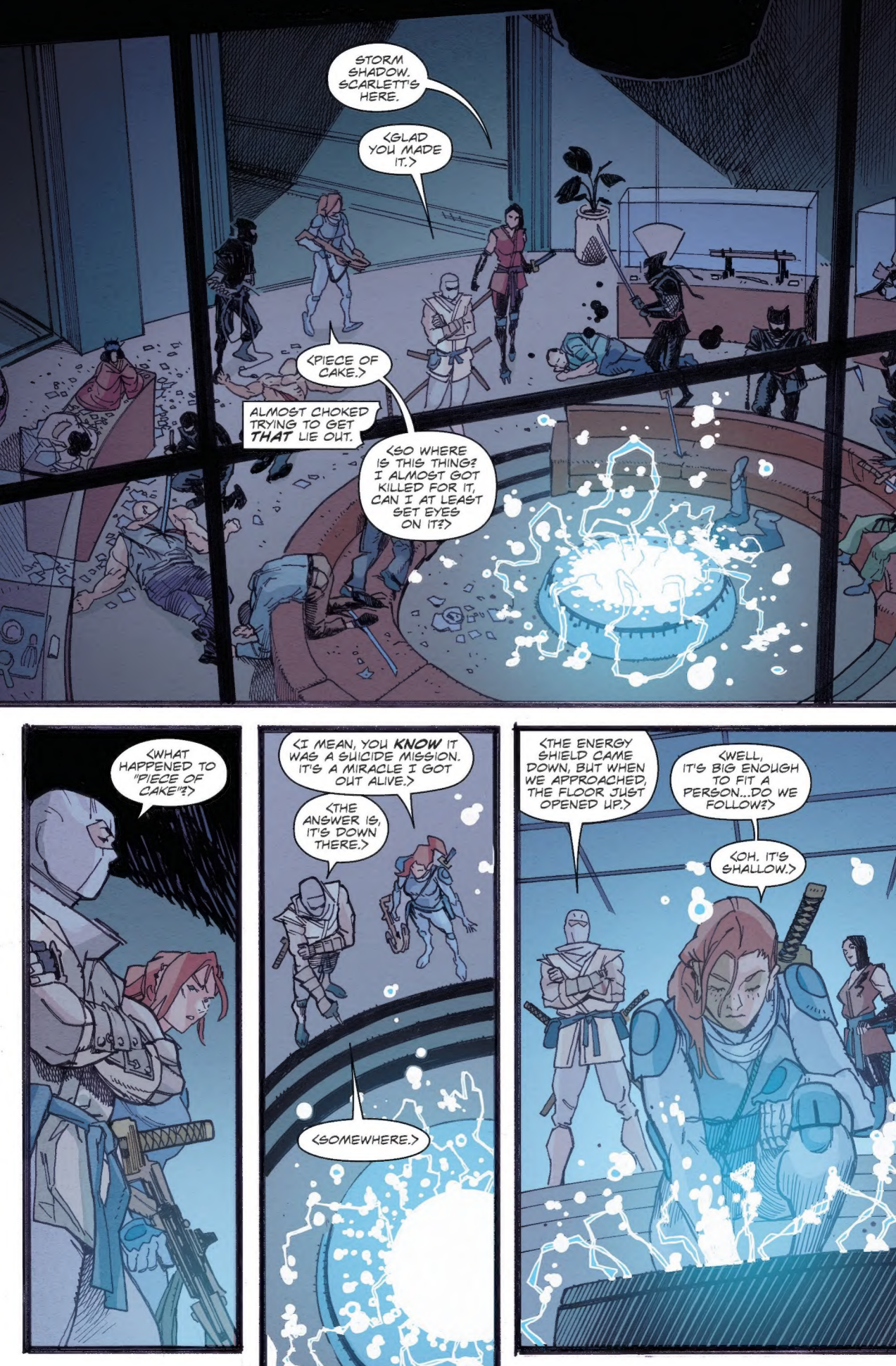
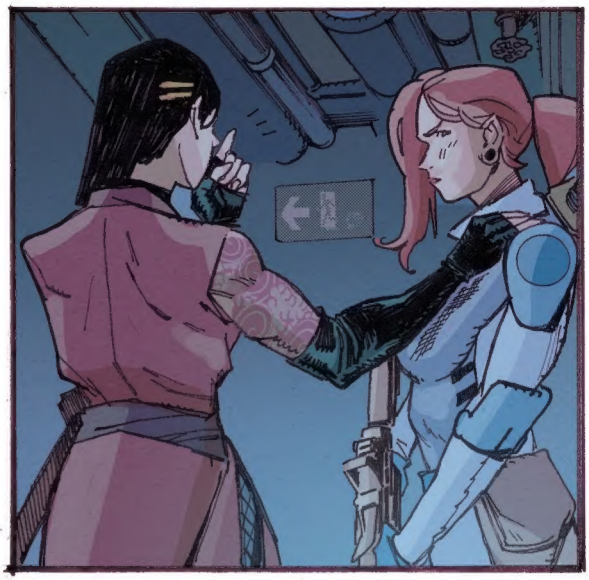
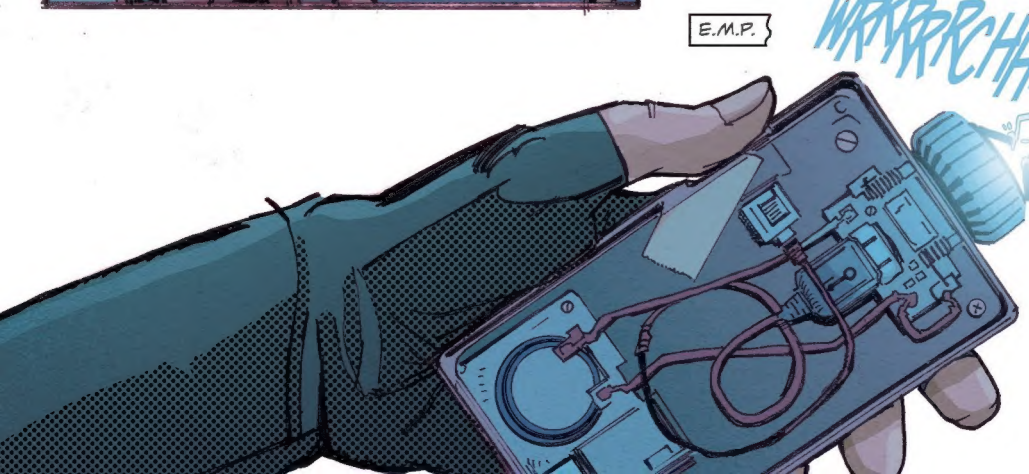
THE SATO III: SAKURA, FLOOR 47. NOW.
"EYES AND EARS"
"EVERYWHERE"
OKAY, SO WE PLAY IT VERY CLOSE.
<I'M JINX, SCARLETT. WELCOME TO SAKURA BUILDING AND PHASE TWO.>*
<THANKS.>
<EXCELLENT WORK ON THE ENERGY SHIELD.>
*TRANSLATED FROM JAPANESE.
<IT'S DOWN? GREAT. DOES THAT MEAN WE'RE DONE?>
<NO. I'LL LET STORM SHADOW FILL YOU IN.>

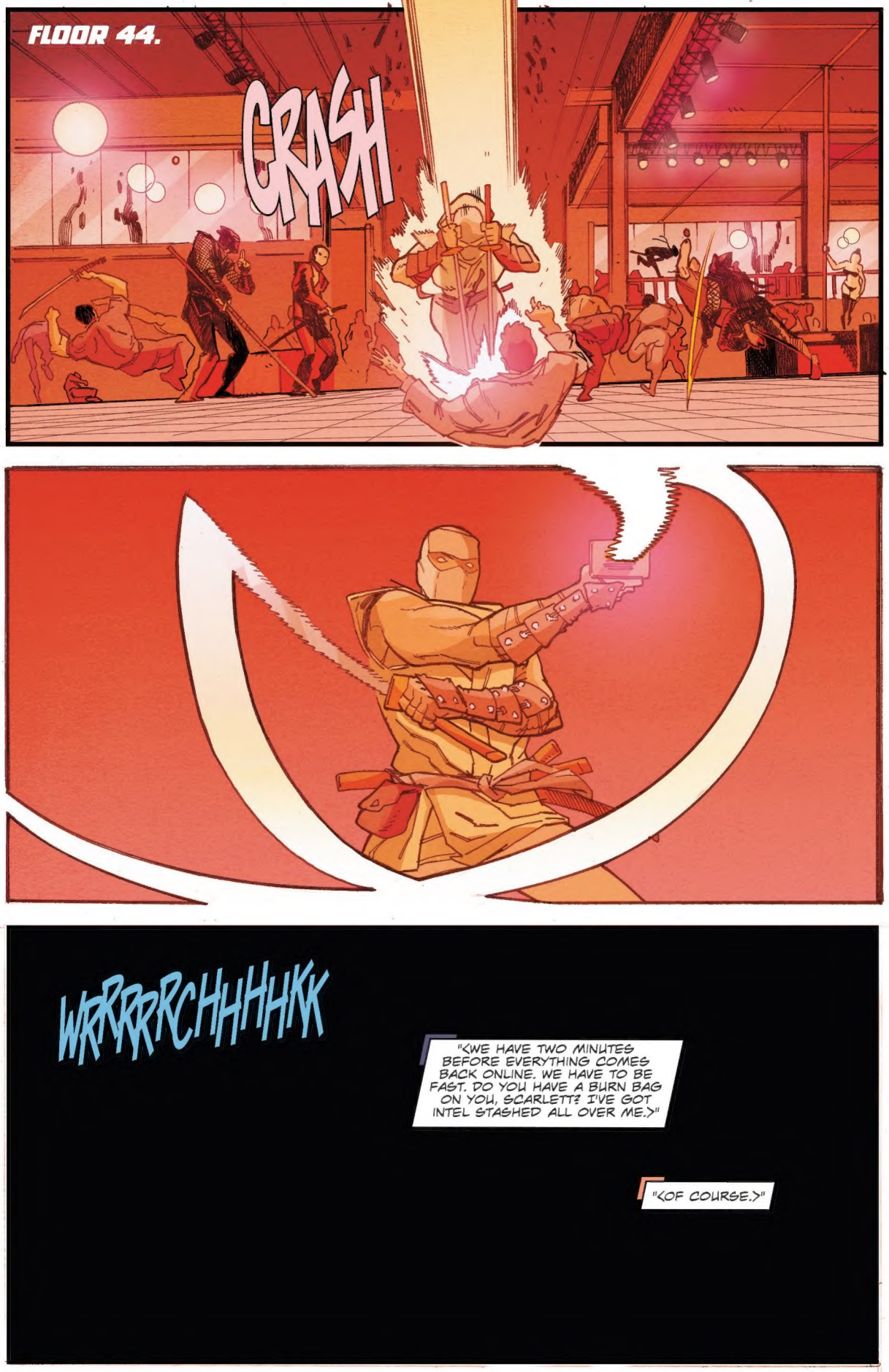

STORM SHADOW. SCARLETT'S HERE.
<GLAD YOU MADE IT.>
<PIECE OF CAKE.>
ALMOST CHOKED TRYING TO GET THAT LIE OUT.
<SO WHERE IS THIS THING? I ALMOST GOT KILLED FOR IT, CAN I AT LEAST SET EYES ON IT?>
<WHAT HAPPENED TO "PIECE OF CAKE"?>
<I MEAN, YOU KNOW IT WAS A SUICIDE MISSION. IT'S A MIRACLE I GOT OUT ALIVE.>
<THE ANSWER IS, IT'S DOWN THERE.>
<SOMEWHERE.>
<THE ENERGY SHIELD CAME DOWN, BUT WHEN WE APPROACHED, THE FLOOR JUST OPENED UP.>
<WELL, IT'S BIG ENOUGH TO FIT A PERSON...DO WE FOLLOW?>
<OH. IT'S SHALLOW.>

<YES. IT MUST HAVE DROPPED TO JUST UNDER THE FLOOR, AND THEN MOVED TO ANOTHER FLOOR. QUITE CLEVER AS LAST GAMBITS GO.>
<BUT THE MUGENONAMI HAVE BEEN AMASSING ON LEVEL 44. SO WE'RE PREPARING A STRIKE FORCE THERE. YOU TWO, TAKE THE SERVICE STAIRS DOWN, AND FIND A DIFFERENT WAY IN. I'LL MEET YOU THERE.>

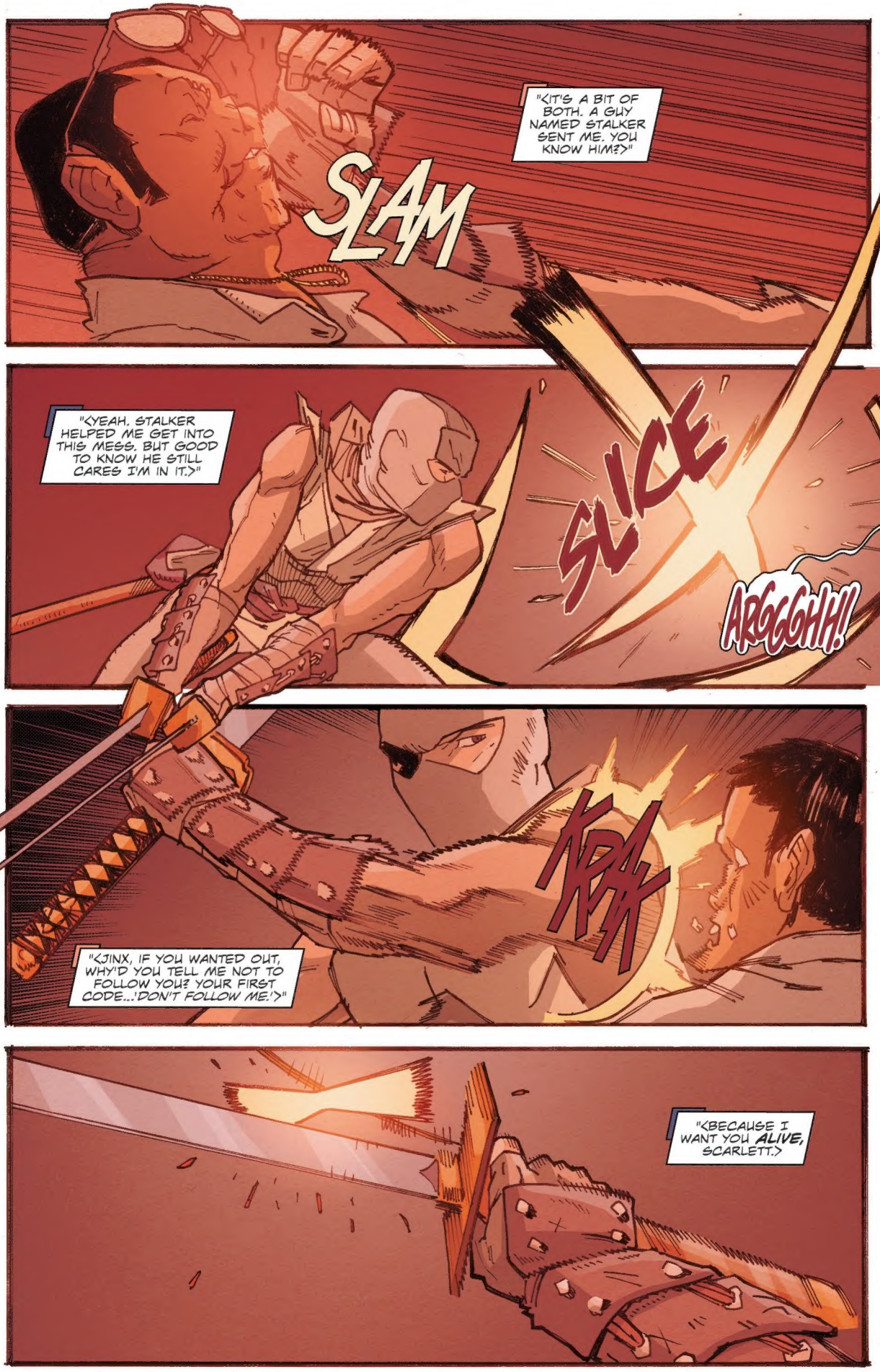
THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NO WAY THAT WEAPON IS ON 44.




E.M.P.
WRRRRRCHHHHHK

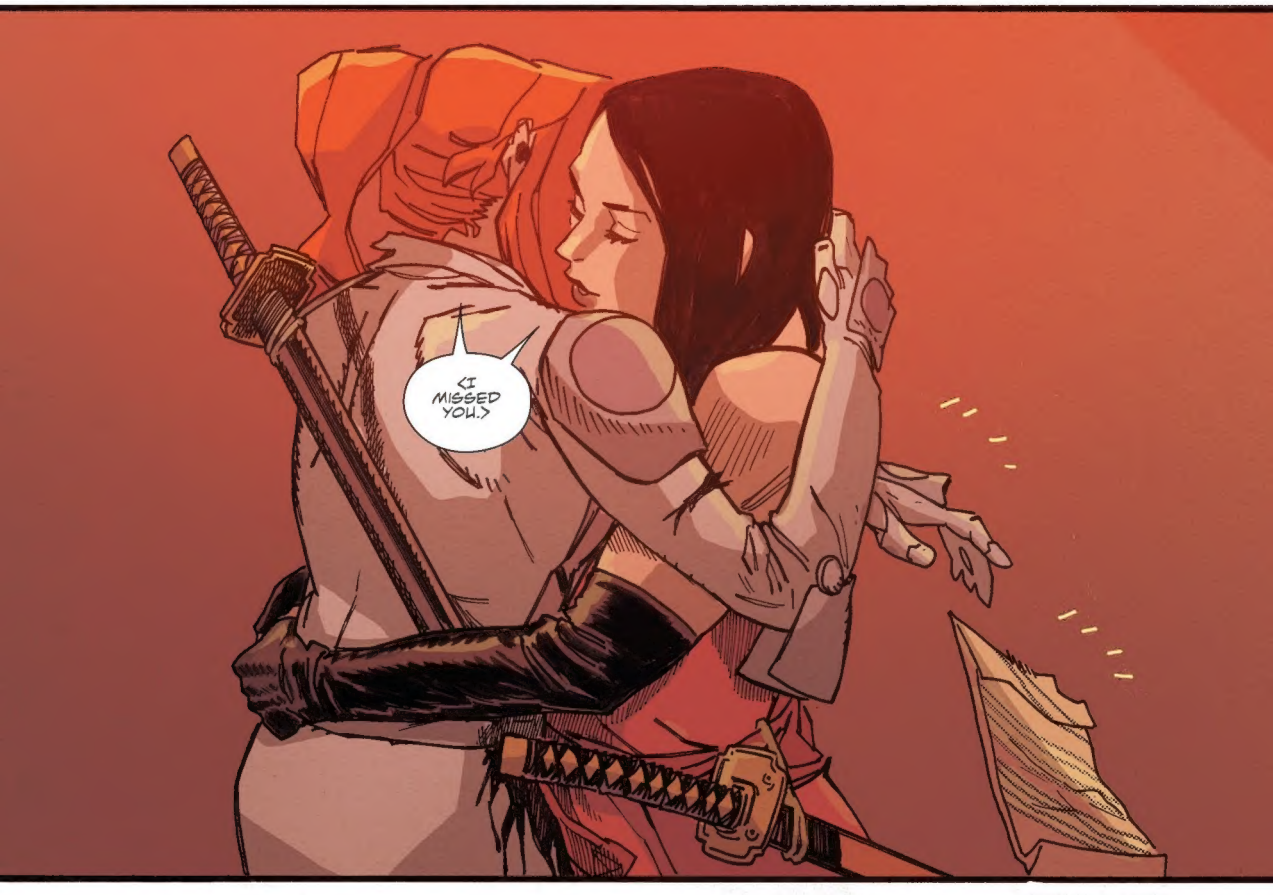

FLOOR 44.
CRASH
WRRRRRCHHHHKK
"<WE HAVE TWO MINUTES BEFORE EVERYTHING COMES BACK ONLINE. WE HAVE TO BE FAST. DO YOU HAVE A BURN BAG ON YOU, SCARLETT? I'VE GOT INTEL STASHED ALL OVER ME.>"
"<OF COURSE.>"

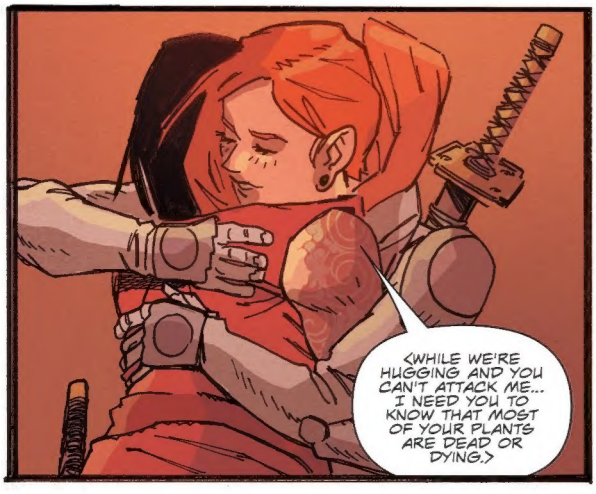
"<CHECK THE LINING OF MY BOOT. LEFT.>"
SLICE
SLICE
"<GOT IT.>"
"<DO THEY...DID YOU COME ON YOUR OWN, OR DID THEY SEND YOU, SCARLETT?>"


"<IT'S A BIT OF BOTH. A GUY NAMED STALKER SENT ME. YOU KNOW HIM?>"
SLAM
"<YEAH. STALKER HELPED ME GET INTO THIS MESS. BUT GOOD TO KNOW HE STILL CARES I'M IN IT.>"
SLICE
ARGGGHH!
"<JINX, IF YOU WANTED OUT, WHY'D YOU TELL ME NOT TO FOLLOW YOU? YOUR FIRST CODE...'DON'T FOLLOW ME!'>"
KRK
"<BECAUSE I WANT YOU ALIVE, SCARLETT.>"

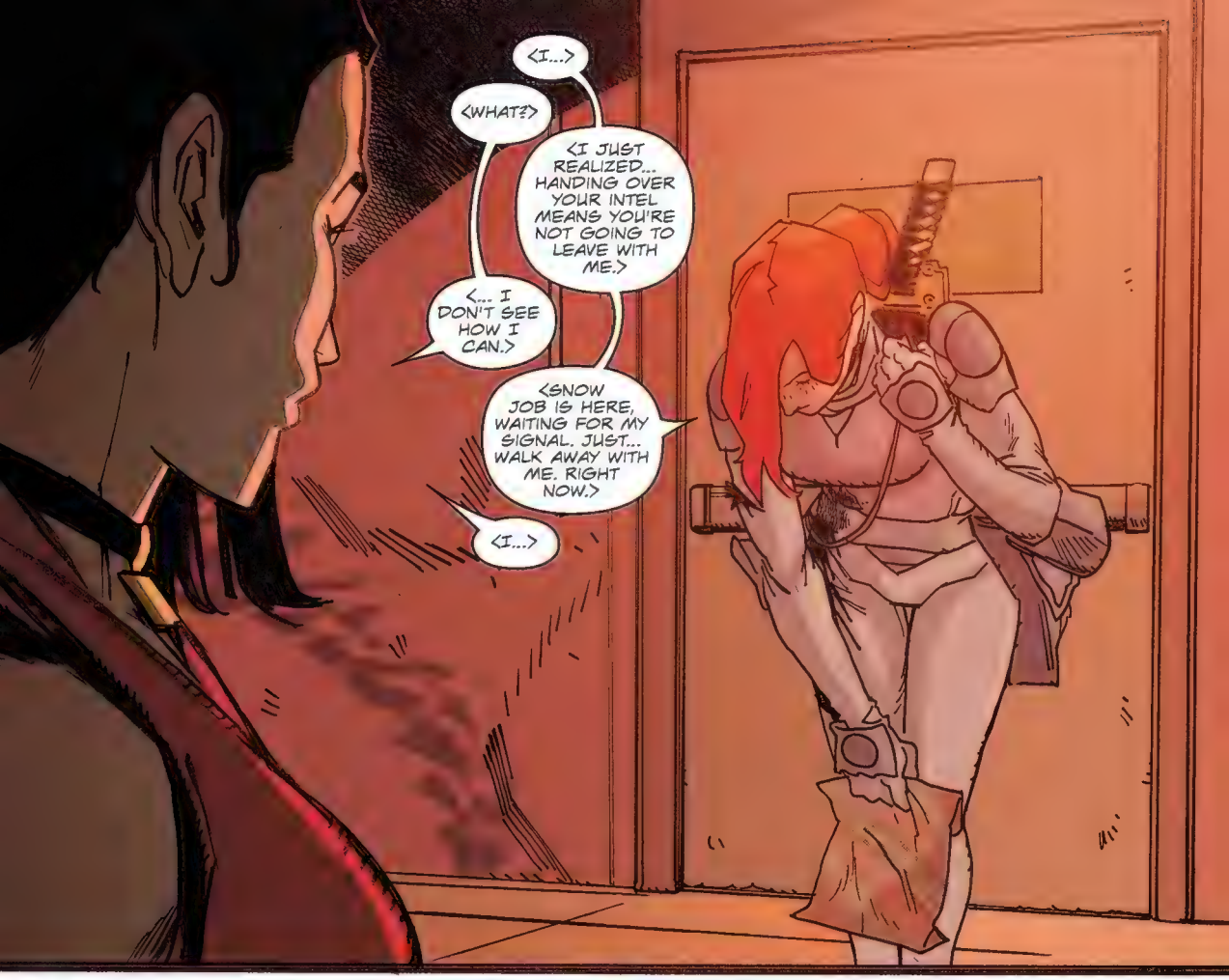
"<AND IF YOU CAME HERE...>"
"<BUT, JINX... I WANT YOU ALIVE, TOO.>
STAB
STAB
HRRRKK!
"<YOU THOUGHT I COULD JUST IGNORE SEEING YOU IN MONACO, AFTER YOU'VE BEEN MISSING TWO YEARS?>
"<I DON'T KNOW WHAT COULD HAVE STOPPED ME FROM COMING. MAYBE NOTHING.>"
SLICEE

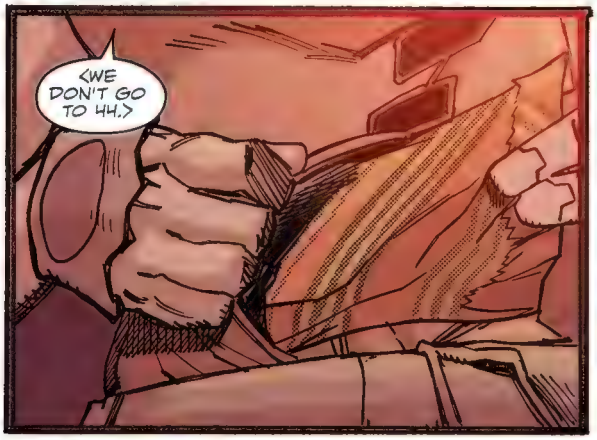
<I KNOW... BUT I WAS AFRAID. IT WAS ONE THING FOR THIS MISSION TO GET ME KILLED. IT WAS ANOTHER FOR IT TO KILL YOU, TOO.>


<I MISSED YOU.>


<WHILE WE'RE HUGGING AND YOU CAN'T ATTACK ME... I NEED YOU TO KNOW THAT MOST OF YOUR PLANTS ARE DEAD OR DYING.>

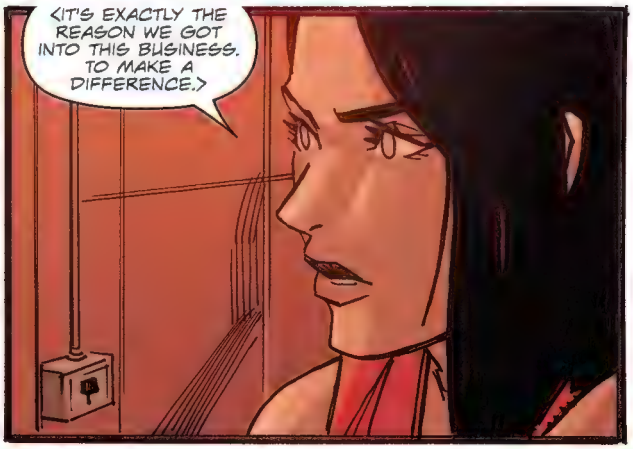
<SCARLETT! YOU PROMISED!>
<I'M TRYING! THEY HATE ME. THEY MISS YOU. NOTHING I DO WORKS!>
<MURDERER!>


<I...>
<WHAT?>
<I JUST REALIZED... HANDING OVER YOUR INTEL MEANS YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LEAVE WITH ME.>
<... I DON'T SEE HOW I CAN.>
<SNOW JOB IS HERE, WAITING FOR MY SIGNAL. JUST... WALK AWAY WITH ME. RIGHT NOW.>
<I...>

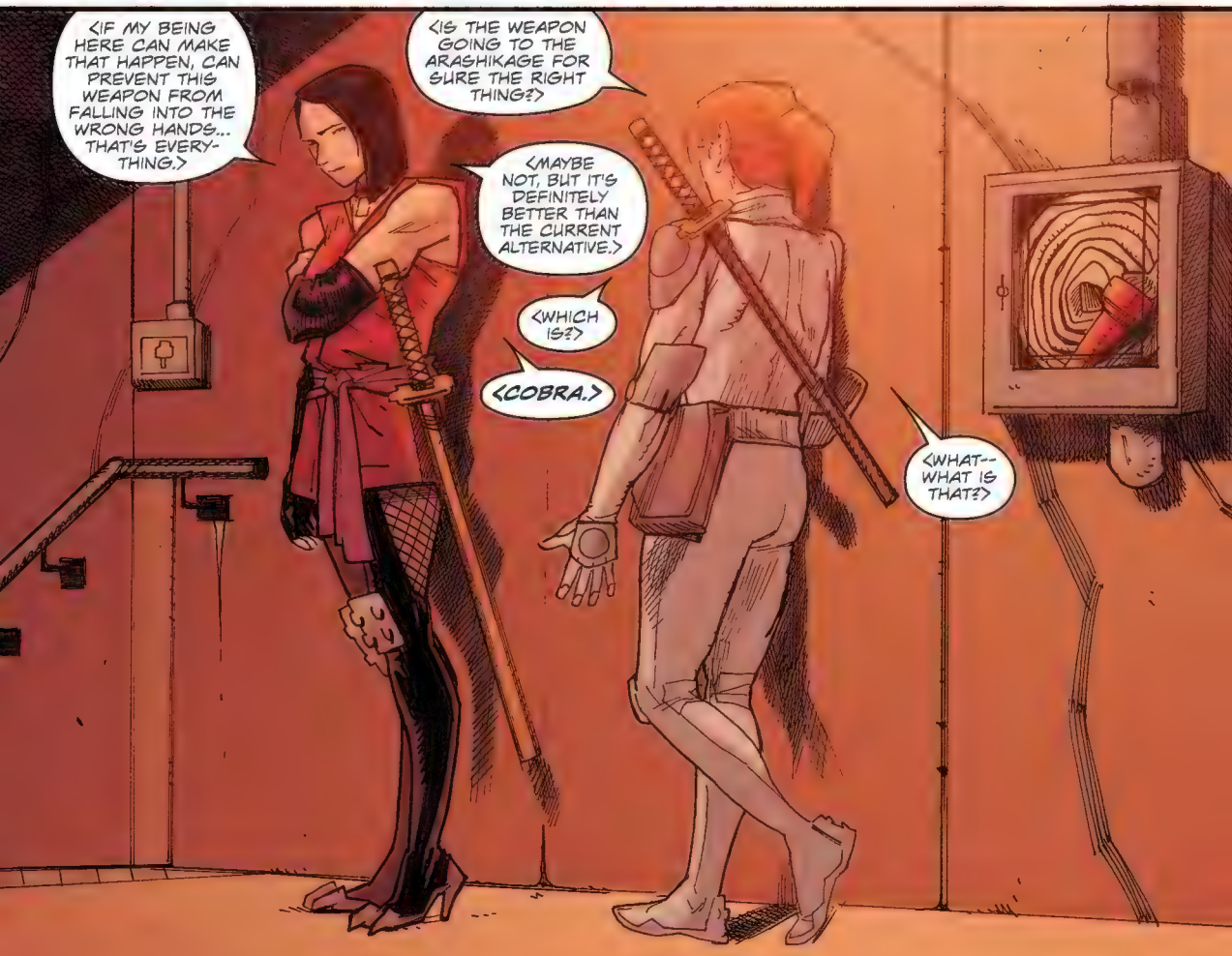

<WE DON'T GO TO 44.>

<WE WALK OUT THE FRONT DOOR AND DISAPPEAR INTO THE CITY...WHILE EVERYONE'S FIGHTING OVER THIS STUPID WEAPON.>

<BUT IT'S NOT STUPID, SCARLETT. THIS WEAPON IS DANGEROUS. IT *MEANS* SOMETHING.>


<IT'S EXACTLY THE REASON WE GOT INTO THIS BUSINESS. TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.>

<I'M AFRAID ALL THE TIME. ALL THE TIME. AND I DESPERATELY ACHE FOR HOME IN A WAY I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WAS POSSIBLE.>
<BUT?>
<BUT I ALSO LOVE IT DOWN INTO THE ABSOLUTE DEEPEST REACHES OF MYSELF. I AM SO GOOD AT THIS. IT MIGHT BE THE ONLY THING I'M GOOD AT IT. AND IT MATTERS SO MUCH, I'M NOT KIDDING, SHANA, BEING HERE RIGHT NOW IS IMPORTANT, IT COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE.>
<I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH YOU KNOW, BUT ARASHIKAGE...THEY MAY BE AN ENEMY NOW, BUT THEY MIGHT BE AN ALLY DOWN THE LINE. SOME THINGS THAT ARE COMING...WE'RE GOING TO NEED ALL THE ALLIES WE AN GET.>


<IF MY BEING HERE CAN MAKE THAT HAPPEN, CAN PREVENT THIS WEAPON FROM FALLING INTO THE WRONG HANDS... THAT'S EVERYTHING.>
<IS THE WEAPON GOING TO THE ARASHIKAGE FOR SURE THE RIGHT THING?>
<MAYBE NOT, BUT IT'S DEFINITELY BETTER THAN THE CURRENT ALTERNATIVE.>
<WHICH IS?>
<COBRA.>
<WHAT--WHAT IS THAT?>

<IT'S A RISING POWER, SHANA. IT'S...IT'S GOING TO BE A PROBLEM FOR ANYONE FIGHTING FOR A FREE WORLD.>
<DOES THAT INCLUDE THE ARASHIKAGE?>
<I DON'T KNOW YET. I'M NOT SURE THEY KNOW YET. IT'S PART OF WHY I'M HERE.>
PING
<OH GOD... WE'RE ALMOST UP ON TIME. I... I'M SO SORRY.>
<NO--DON'T DO THAT, WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THAT. JUST--STAY SMART. STAY COOL. STAY ALIVE. WE'LL GET OUT OF HERE. WE WILL.>
EVERYTHING IN ME WANTS TO CRY IT OUT WITH HER, BUT EVEN MORE THAN ME, SHE HAS TO STAY ICY COLD OR THEY WILL SNIFF HER OUT.
THE ONLY THING WORSE THAN GETTING MYSELF KILLED ON THIS MISSION, IS IF I CAME ALL THIS WAY AND GOT HER KILLED.
<WAIT. WE SHOULDN'T GO TO 44. THERE'S NO WAY THE WEAPON IS THERE.>
<EXPLAIN.>
<FOUR-FOUR IS CODE FOR LIKE...DOUBLE DEATH, RIGHT? THE WEAPON WAS HOUSED ON FOUR-SEVEN--A MUCH LUCKIER FLOOR THAN FOUR-FOUR--WHY THEN PUT IT ON FOUR-FOUR? UNLESS IT'S A TRAP. FOUR-EIGHT WOULD BE LUCKIER...MORE LIKE FOUR-SEVEN. PLUS, WHY ANNOUNCE ITS LOCATION BY AMASSING ALL YOUR FORCES THERE?
AND WHAT BETTER TRICK THAN TO ACTUALLY SEND THE WEAPON UP, WHEN IT LOOKS TO ANYONE OBSERVING LIKE IT WENT DOWN?
<YOU BRILLIANT BEAUTIFUL @#$%&.>

F48
<YES. THIS IS IT.>
<IF WE CAN JUST KEEP THEM ON UH, WE'LL BE FINE.

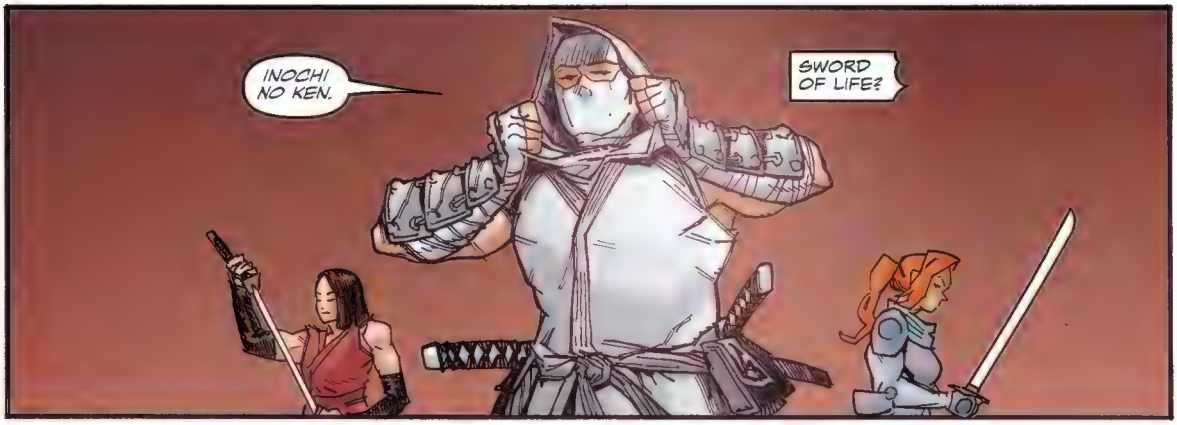
<THE HELICOPTER HAS LANDED, BUYER ENROUTE TO OUR LOCATION.>
<THERE'S THE WEAPON. YOU WERE RIGHT ON THE MONEY.>
IF SHE'S NOT COMING BACK WITH ME, I'M AT LEAST GOING TO SEE WHAT'S IN THIS DAMNED BOX.

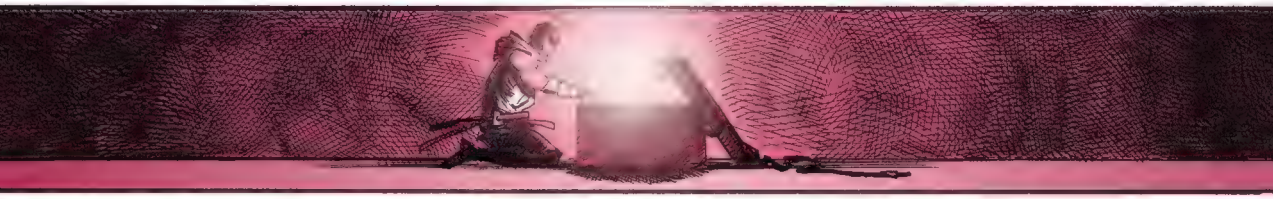
"REMEMBER COLOMBIA."
NOT LIKELY TO FORGET THAT.
GOD, I HOPE THIS GOES EASIER THAN THAT.

WE IMMEDIATELY FALL INTO OUR OLD RHYTHMS.
IT'S GOOD TO FIGHT NEXT TO HER AGAIN.
SHUNK
SHUNK
I'VE MISSED IT.
SHE HAS, TOO. I CAN TELL.
AIIIIEEE!
ARGGHH!

<STORM SHADOW. WE NEED ASSISTANCE ON 48.>
<WE HAVE EYES ON THE BOX.>
SLICE
SLICE
<REPEAT, WE'RE ON 48. THE BOX IS HERE.>
<AND SO IS COBRA. REPEAT WE HAVE COBRA OPERATIVES ON 48.>
<STORM SHADOW, DO YOU COPY?!>

THE AREA IS NOT SECURED. I REPEAT, NOT SECURED!
SECURE THE AREA NOW! COBRA COMMANDER WILL NOT WAIT!
COMMANDER. SIR...THE WEAPON IS NOT SECURED, WE CANNOT CONTROL THE ROOM WITHOUT REINFORCEMENTS!
<A LITTLE HELP?!>
<FINE.>





NEXT: COBRA COMMANDER?!

DIRECT ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO

[redacted]

GIJOE@SKYBOUND.COM

Wow, ANOTHER killer issue in the books and what an epic panel of Storm Shadow to end our penultimate issue on! Editor Ben Abernathy once again reporting for active duty and like last month, I'm thrilled to have recruited our sensational scribe, Kelly Thompson, to answer some letters!

And with that, let's check the mailbag!

Dear Skybound Staff:

Just wanted to put in my 2 cents regarding SCARLETT #1. This is the first G. I. Joe Energon Universe title I picked up as it spotlights G. I. Joe's lead heroine and my favorite female Joe.

Kelly Thompson was an excellent pick to write this miniseries given her previously having written Black Widow and Captain Marvel. I liked Scarlett's internal monologue/first person POV--hope this will carry on as the series progresses.

I agree, Kelly was the absolute RIGHT pick to write this series!

Having Scarlett on an espionage mission rarely happened in the main G. I. Joe title so the opening segment in Monaco got my attention. Hoping also that the series will only take place in real countries.

The nods to the films Goldfinger and True Lies are appreciated.

Another good move, retaining the fact that Scarlett and Jinx are close friends; something established in both Marvel's & DDP's take on G. I. Joe. It'll be interesting if either the mission, or Jinx's own ties to the Arashikage ninja clan will challenge/fracture it past repair or strengthen it all the more.

Snow Job's cameo was well written--and its good to see Ms. Thompson has read Larry Hama's dossiers on the Joes as Snow Job was a qualified expert with all N.A.T.O. long-range sniper rifles.

Stalker's having ties to the Arashikage was a twist from the original continuity. Will this be of consequence as the miniseries continues?

You'll have to wait and see about Stalker and 100% agreed about Snow Job. I was so excited we included him in the first script--it inspired me to dig through my basement looking for my original action figure! I never found him :(

I remember seeing online that Ms. Thompson drew inspiration from James Bond 007, Mission: IMPOSSIBLE and John Wick; she should've also cited Quentin Tarantino's Kill Bill Vol. 1 as the way Scarlett took on the Arashikage ninjas similar to the way the Bride took on the Crazy 88.

That cliffhanger (nothing like seeing a very beautiful heroine in dire straits)...it rather compromises a variant cover for Scarlett #2. Too bad it wasn't a certain Shadowman, that would've been a twist like seeing that samurai guarding the Hard Master.

The art by Mr. Ferrari is very good. He nails Scarlett's and Jinx's looks perfectly. Hope he's the permanent artist for this miniseries.

Yes, Marco's the artist for all five issues…and we're so fortunate to have him! He's doing some truly inspired work! And let's also get a shout out to the amazing colors by Lee Loughridge and terrific lettering by Rus Wooton.

Thanks by the way for not naming Scarlett's superior after generals Colton, Austin, Hollingsworth, Flagg, or Rey. Appreciate it. Coverwise, Cover B is the best.

Thanks again for another excellent read.

Respectfully,
Dino Virgilio G. Monzon III
Republic of the Philippines

Thanks for writing in, Dino, I really appreciate it. I hope you're also checking out our DESTRO miniseries!

Scarlett Team,

When the Energon Universe is home to Void Rivals and Daniel Warren Johnson's Transformers, it's incredibly impressive to me that Scarlett has some of the best fight scenes in the Energon Universe in just its first issue! This is, of course, no disrespect to the other great writers and artists in Energon, just a testament to what Kelly Thompson, Marco Ferrari and Lee Loughridge accomplished in just their first outing.

I also really dig Scarlett and Jinx having their own secret code system; as it not only sells the depth of their friendship, but also seems like something people who deal with military intelligence, terrorists and black market dealers would think to do and is evidently helping them...Well, aside from that part where Jinx seemingly betrayed Scarlett to the Arashikage, heh heh!

Keep up the good work!
Sean Taylor

Hey

Hi,

Great second issue. The G.I. Joe universe is really coming together due to these focused miniseries. They give us a detailed look into one particular part of the Joe world rather than trying to write whole-group stories that end up more as plot than character.

Ferrari's art is the perfect choice for Thompson's writing. I just feel like I know who Scarlett is by listening to her talk, or seeing her standing, looking at her gesture, or watching her fighting. Sure, you may say, that's how writing and art work! Yeah, but often they don't work this well, or they are really focused on other goals. This art, and this writing, are about giving us an insight into Scarlett while also kicking some ass.

The coloring also works particularly well in conjunction with the line art, creating a nice tightrope walk between bold, flat colors and shading.

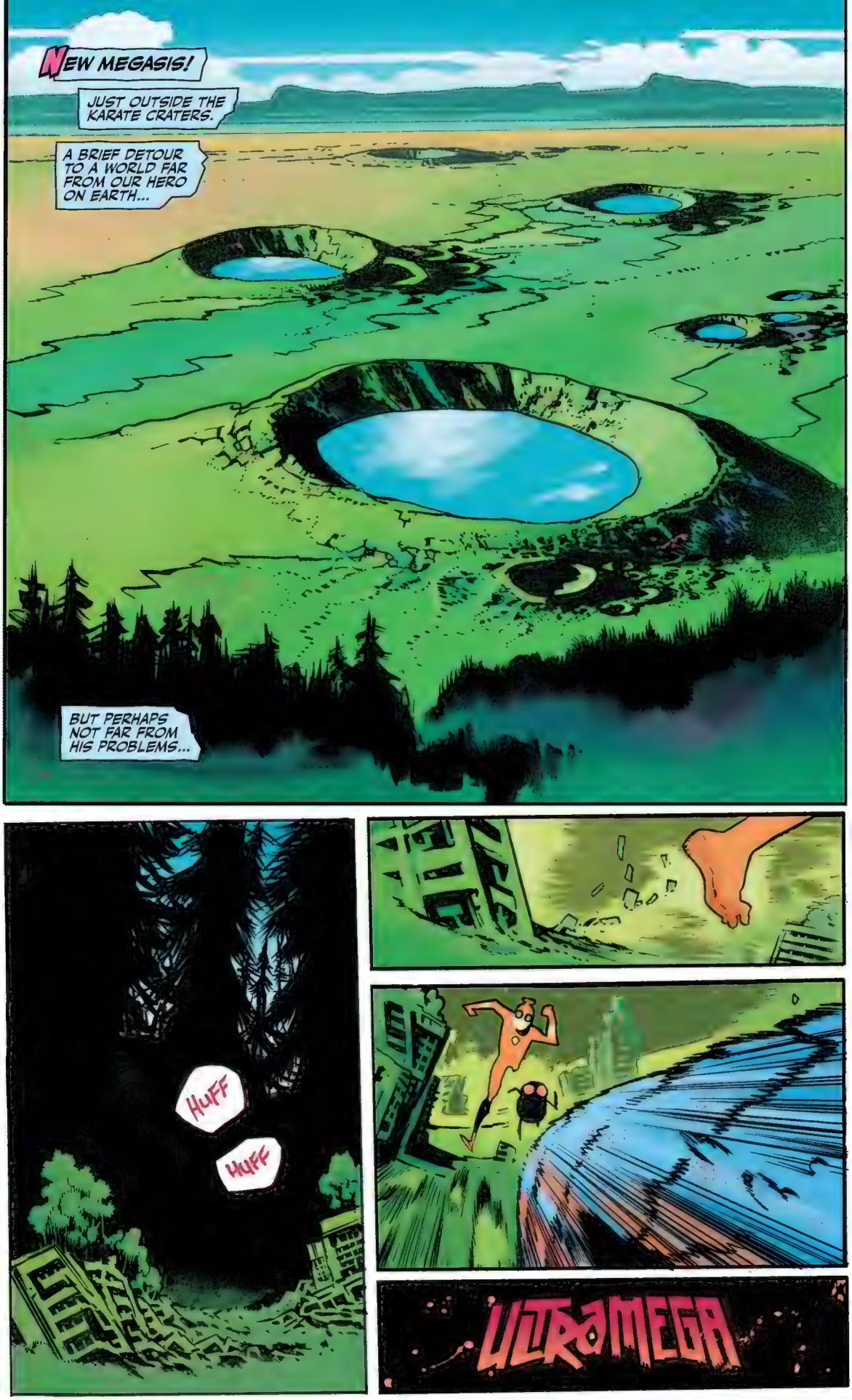
I have rarely been so engrossed in an action comic that more or less introduces its characters from scratch. Yes, we have decades of Joe history, and this does glide forward on that tide of lore. But it doesn't need that; it succeeds all on its own as an independent dive into a character along with some fun, well-choreographed battles and other forms of action.

As someone who is reading pretty much everything Thompson is writing at the moment, I also appreciate that this, interestingly, feels the most different from her other recent work, especially in terms of dialog. That's probably not what anyone would predict; she writes plenty of action comics so why would this be different? But there are certain quirks or tendencies that I find across her writing, from her Captain Marvel to The Cull to Birds of Prey. For instance, there's a quippiness, a way of women bouncing their repartee off each other, certain kinds of second-tier character archetypes that tend to hang out with the main characters. It's fun, that's why I'm reading so much of her work. But Scarlett feels quite different. It still feels very much like her writing, but it stands apart as well.

Chris

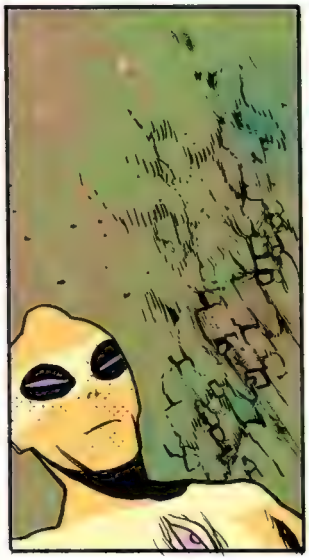
And that concludes another epic letter column for this month… only one pulse-pounding issue left! What epic, sense-shattering moments will Kelly, Marco, Lee and Rus deliver next month?! See you in 30 days to find out…and please keep the letters rolling, we love to hear from you! And as an extra treat for everyone--check out the epic preview to ULTRAMEGA #5 on the following pages!

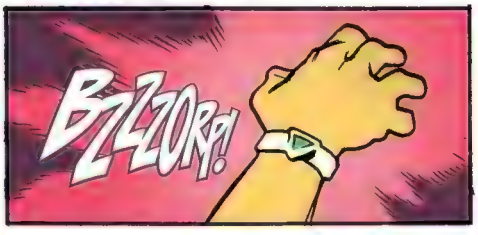
--Ben


NEW MEGASIS!
JUST OUTSIDE THE KARATE CRATERS.
A BRIEF DETOUR TO A WORLD FAR FROM OUR HERO ON EARTH...
BUT PERHAPS NOT FAR FROM HIS PROBLEMS...
HUFF
HUFF
ULTRAMEGA

ZZZZZZZZ
CHRP CHRP

CHRP




BZZORP!

STILL NO SIGN OF OUR SUBVERTS FROM UP HERE! STAY VIGILANT DOWN THERE, SORA!

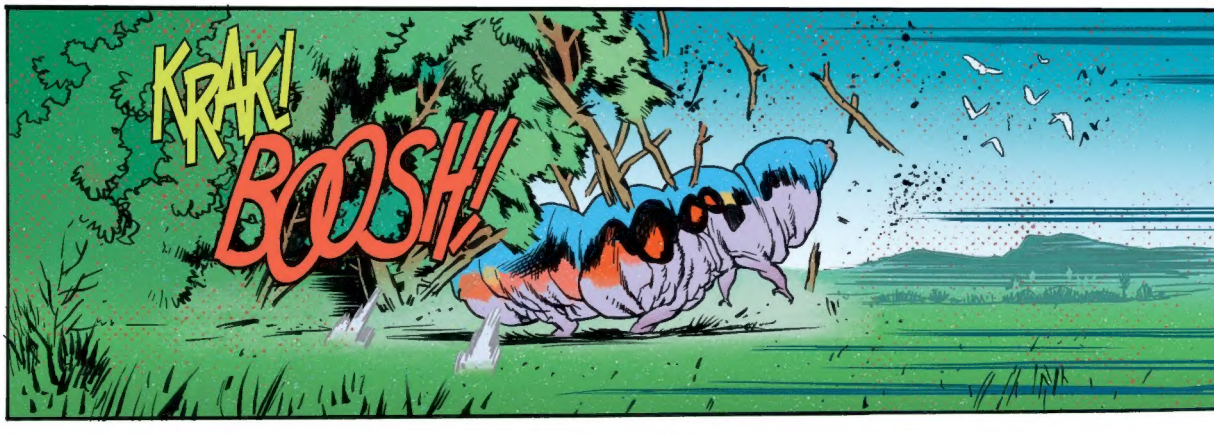
STILL NO SIGN... I'M SURE YOU ALL HEARD.
EVERYTHING IN THE *FOREST* HEARD THAT.
EVERYONE KNOWS THESE SEPARATISTS POSE NO REAL THREAT TO NEW MEGASIS. THIS IS THEATER.
TONIGHT'S CELEBRATION WOULD REQUIRE SECURITY EVEN IF KNOWN FANATICS WEREN'T ON THE LOOSE, BORO.
WE GET TO PERFORM OUR SACRED DUTIES AS KEEPERS OF THE HEAVENLY BALANCE... AND HUMP A TREE...
...ALL IN ONE AFTERNOON.
ZZZZZ

...
=HUFF=! GRAB HIM! HIS PARTNER =GASP= CAN'T BE FAR!
CHOOM!
CRAP.
THEY'RE ON THE MOVE, BUTA! WE SAW ONE HEADING WEST!

I DON'T SEE ANYTHING FROM UP HERE...
YOU ONLY SAW ONE...?

WEST...
THAT'S TOWARD THE CITY.
WE'VE GOT MOVEMENT!

CHOOM!


KRAK!
BOOSH!

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